

**(Washington, DC)** Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) introduced a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the contributions of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). CITES was created in 1973 to ensure that the survival of endangered species is not threatened by international trade. **(Please find attached a copy of the legislation)**

“Nearly 5,000 species of animals and 28,000 species of plants are protected by the Convention against over-exploitation through international trade. Unfortunately, international trade, both legal and illegal, has exacerbated the dangers and brought more and more species close to extinction. International wildlife trade is estimated to be worth billions of dollars per year and to include hundreds of millions of live plants and animals and derived products such as food products, leather and fur, ornamentals, ivory, and timber,” said Hastings.

Every two to three years the parties of CITES meet at the Conference of the Parties to review the status of species in danger of extinction and establish trade restrictions. The 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties was held last year.

“Several proposals were submitted during the summit, some of them ensuring better protections for endangered species, others trying to downlist species and re-open trade. While proposals to downlist elephant populations were successfully defeated, numerous proposals to establish stronger protections for the polar bear, eight sharks, the bluefin tuna and other species were unfortunately rejected. I am saddened to see that economic interests have prevailed over species conservation, which could ultimately bring them to extinction. This is unacceptable.

“The United States has a moral obligation to protect endangered species and their natural habitat. Wild animals are a very important part of our commonly held natural resources and contribute to the diversity and stability of our environment. It is essential to work with the international community to ensure the survival of these incredible species. I believe that the stakes are too high to let national interests and differences hinder the future of our planet,” added Hastings.

The resolution will recognize the important contributions the Convention has made in regulating international trade in endangered species and protecting endangered species worldwide. It will also applaud the Convention’s leadership in protecting elephants in Tanzania and Zambia.

Lastly, the resolution will urge all parties to the Convention to collaborate effectively to curb excessive exploitation of species for international trade and to adopt stronger protections for several endangered species at the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties in 2013.

**Joining Hastings as original co-sponsors are Representatives (16) Earl Blumenauer, Gerry Connolly, Ted Deutch, Keith Ellison, Eni Faleomavaega, Sam Farr, Mazie Hirono, Barbara Lee, John Lewis, James Moran, Grace Napolitano, Bobby Rush, Fortney Pete Stark, Mike Thompson, Debbie Wasserman Schultz, and David Wu.**

###

---

 [CITES resolution 112th.pdf](#)